

Application No. 09/681,229
Amendment Dated January 11, 2005
Reply to Office Action of October 26, 2004

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request further examination and reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the arguments set forth below. In the Office Action mailed October 26, 2004, claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 19 have been rejected, claims 2-4, 7 and 20-23 have been objected to and claims 10-18 and 24-31 have been allowed. In response, the Applicants have submitted the following remarks, canceled claims 2 and 20 and amended claims 1 and 19. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-19 and 21-31 are pending. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the amended claims and the remarks below.

Information Disclosure Statement

Within the Office Action, it is stated that the Information Disclosure Statement filed on June 26, 2003, fails to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP §609 because there is no submission of the concise explanation of the relevance of the non-English language reference (DE 40 34 327). Accordingly, the Applicants have submitted, along with this response, an Information Disclosure Statement in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP §609.

Rejections Under 35 USC §102

Claims 1, 5, 6, 9 and 19 have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by European Patent Application No. 0947340 to Honda (hereinafter Honda). Within the Office Action, it is stated that claim 2 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, the Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claim 2, such that claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 5, 6 and 9 are dependent upon the independent claim 1. As discussed above, the amended independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Honda.

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Accordingly, claims 5, 6 and 9 are also allowable as being dependent upon an allowable base claim.

Within the Office Action, it is also stated that claim 20 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, the Applicants have amended claim 19 to include the limitations of claim 20, such that claim 19 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 USC §103

Claim 8 has been rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Honda in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,509,530 to Curtis et al (hereinafter Curtis). Claim 8 is dependent upon the independent claim 1. As discussed above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Honda. Accordingly, claim 8 is also allowable as being dependent upon an allowable base claim.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2, 3, 4, 7 and 20-23 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As described above, claims 2 and 20 have been canceled and the limitations of these claims have been rewritten in independent form in claims 1 and 19, respectively.

Claims 3, 4 and 7 are dependent upon the independent claim 1. As discussed above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Honda. Accordingly, claims 3, 4 and 7 are also allowable as being dependent upon an allowable base claim.

Claims 21-23 are dependent upon the independent claim 19. As discussed above, the independent claim 19 is allowable over the teachings of Honda. Accordingly, claims 21-23 are also allowable as being dependent upon an allowable base claim.

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Claims 10-18 and 24-31 are allowed. The Applicants respectfully acknowledge and thank the Examiner for allowable subject matter.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, they are encouraged to call the undersigned at 414-271-7590 to discuss the same so that any outstanding issues can be expeditiously resolved.

Respectfully submitted,

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